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ABSTRACT

Growing conservatism, dwindling resources, and the increased diversity of students require that the California community colleges develop a plan to meet the challenges of the future. First, efforts must be made to ameliorate the current crisis in educational leadership caused by excessive concern with quantitative management techniques, reporting requirements, and collective bargaining. Leadership initiative can be regained by measures such as a recognition of the pre-eminence of college presidents in educational leadership; faculty support of the final directions chosen by presidents; the encouragement by governing boards of creative and dynamic action on the part of chief administrators chosen for their commitment to education; and the revision of the California Education Code. Second, strategies must be developed to preserve local control, protect tuition-free admissions, and counter the increased competition from four-year institutions. Such strategies include changes in state policy, legislative lobbying, and the development of alternate funding sources. Finally, priority should be given to fulfilling the community college's educational purposes with regard to basic skills, general education, and specific curricular needs in health, energy-related, information, and humanities disciplines. Active pursuit of this agenda will carry the community colleges through the coming decade. (JP)

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Constance M. Carroll
President, Indian Valley Colleges

Address to the General Assembly
California Community and Junior College Association
1980 Annual Conference, "Crossroads '80"

November 9, 1980

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It is both a pleasure and an honor for me to meet with you this morning. As some of you know, I am a relative newcomer both to California and to the community college segment of higher education. This morning, I would like to share with you my perceptions about the state of our community colleges as well as a proposed agenda for meeting the pressing, future educational needs of our students which, from my standpoint as a transplant from the four-year college and university sector, are not very different from the needs of the rest of the vast industry of higher education.

First, I'd like you to know that Amy Carter has advised me that community colleges will play an important role in the 1980's. I thought that this message from the current President's domestic and foreign policy advisor would be reassuring. The immediate questions are: What role will we play and how effective will we be in this task? In listening to Professor Cosand and panelists during the conference interest sessions, I think we can all agree that the world around us, both far reaching and immediate, is

rapidly changing. For us, as community college educators, this means that we, too, must change in order to serve its needs and, most important, to reassert our responsibility for leading it, leading it toward a more enlightened course of action and a more humane system of values. Some of the things that we know about the future years are the following three basic conditions:

1. We know that the fast approaching, dark night of conservatism in our country seriously threatens the liberating mission of education as well as the compassionate assistance of the social services;
2. We know that diminishing monetary resources threaten our ability to provide broad educational opportunities or flexible, creative and new educational directions; and
3. We know that the economic pressures on our citizenry as well as the increasingly pluralistic and diverse characteristics of our students will place greater demands than ever before upon our institutions of higher learning.

Having said that, what I would like to do now is to discuss our role in the next decade under three broad categories of concern. This will enable us to focus on the challenges of the next decade as well as an agenda for rising to meet these challenges under the three categories of leadership, strategy and educational purpose.

Leadership

There is an old, Greek proverb which states that "in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king." Recent events have shown that there is still some truth to that. Leadership is much more than careful management or correct stewardship. Leadership, first of all, consists of vision, a sense of where we should go. Its second requirement is instilling in its constituencies a sense of agreement and common purpose in reaching the directions and the goals identified. In education, the effective practice of leadership requires, in addition, an intellectual commitment to and a genuine love for the academic disciplines and the learning enterprise. Toward the end of the 70's and now in the 80's, there emerged numerous obstacles to the dynamic and the poetic, if you will, vision and leadership styles which were practiced in the earlier part of this century.

The resulting temptation for educational leaders to become tinkerers and rather passive managers of quantifiable activities is, I will be the first to admit, the primary temptation placed before us in these decades of confusion and transition. It is a temptation which has become almost irresistible to legislators, governing boards, Senator Pell, college presidents, faculties, taxpayer groups; in short, everyone who becomes involved in some aspect or another of higher education.

In recent years, following the passage of Proposition 13, we have all, I think, fallen prey to what psychologists and sociologists term the "Stockholm Syndrome." (This term is related

to a 1973 bank robbery in Stockholm, Sweden, during which the robbers held many bank customers hostage. When these hostages were released they exhibited, to the surprise and consternation of their liberators, a close identification and empathy with their captors. This same phenomenon has been observed with other hostages, POW's and the like.) Because of the renewed interest in justification and accountability on the part of external agencies, we in higher education have also come to identify our own attitudes and activities with the "captor." Our very language reflects this. The leadership of higher education now speaks in such terms as: master planning; accountability systems; cost-effectiveness; marketing; consumers; statistical projections; zero-base budgeting (a moment of silence, please, for that one) and the like.

In mentioning these terms, I don't mean to offend anyone or to suggest that these concerns are not important, legitimate or worthwhile. They certainly are. What I do mean to suggest is that this new "para-business," "meta-legislative" framework in which we now operate obscures and impedes the exercise of creative and dynamic leadership. Sometimes at night, when my ecological consciousness indulges itself, I wonder how many forests have fallen victim to the endless pyramid of master plan documents which we all produce each year and which, more often than not, rest under layers of dust on our shelves and in our archives.

Also, our work has become infinitely more complicated by new impositions. In California as in other states, increasing statewide

centralization, both state and federal reporting requirements and the universal hunger for more and more statistical information to justify expenditures literally jam the precious hours in which attention should be paid to educational matters.

In addition, the fascination with collective bargaining has likewise distracted our attention and diverted our efforts from educational activities. Here, I don't mean to suggest that collective bargaining is not an important or a difficult activity, since it involves the great majority of our employees, and I for one relish the exchange of "war stories" on the subject; but I do not believe it should be the central focus of our institutions to the degree it has been in recent years. (By the way, as an indication that unionization will increase in the 80's, I recently learned that even the animals who perform in television commercials now have a union. It is called the "Animal Guild of America." I'm sure that all of us could, if asked, suggest additional members for this guild.)

What, then, should we do about this crisis in leadership? I would offer the following suggestions:

1. First of all, the educational community must recognize the pre-eminence of presidents and chancellors in the area of educational leadership.
2. Second, faculties must again assume their responsibility for suggesting and developing educational programs to support the final directions taken by the educational leader.

3. Third, boards of trustees should hire as their chief administrative officers educational leaders. Office complexes already abound in business managers, accountants and personnel directors as staff support.
4. Fourth, having hired a chief administrative or executive officer, governing boards as well as the staff should allow and encourage their presidents and chancellors to be active, creative and dynamic in implementing their educational vision within the framework of college or district policy. It should be understood that risks must be taken and errors, inevitably, made; but the prognosis of success, as thousands of years and wars in which leadership was a supported activity have demonstrated, is good.
5. Fifth, the California Education Code must be both revised and simplified to allow the active exercise of leadership. (Although I pride myself on my equanimity, I have been unable to contain a passionate disdain for the Education Code which has become the woolly mammoth of California education.)
6. Finally, to ensure success, presidents and chancellors must employ, develop and hold accountable an adequate staff in order to support their focusing on their role as educational leaders. Otherwise, the job of chief executive or chief administrative officer can become too large and too complicated for anyone to perform effectively.

In summary, the job of leader is difficult, but possible. Moreover, it is an essential component of our institutions if we are to go into the 80's as the heros rather than the victims of our destiny.

Strategy

Having spoken about leadership and vision, I'd now like us to turn our attention to strategies for implementing our decisions. California, more than other states, has spawned a situation in the state which rivals the Byzantine Empire in confusion, complexity, intrigue and general ill will. Proposition 13, the Gann Initiative, AB-8, innumerable and contradictory funding plans, unusually intense legislative scrutiny and an Education Code which addresses more minutiae than Hammurabi, have made our collective enterprise a circus of uncertainty. Local boards of trustees have lost their financial clout as well as their ability to respond intelligently and rapidly to local community needs in favor of a growing, centralized control which, like Pirandello's characters in search of a play, is unable to develop meaningful or consistent policy. Most important, the financial base upon which we must rely is becoming smaller at the very time when the educational needs of communities are becoming larger. As public institutions, the educational community stands to lose the most, as the conservative mood of taxpayers and their legislative representatives sweeps the nation. Among community colleges, the California colleges are particularly vulnerable because they have steadfastly kept faith with the

liberal notions of equal educational opportunity and access through a tuition-free system of funding. Our collective refusal to fall from grace in this regard makes our institutions likely targets of fiscal criticism in the 80's.

Moreover, within the larger context of the higher education community, new shifts in alliances have already become evident. The California Community Colleges will face, in the 1980's, greater competition from four-year colleges and universities, both within and outside the State of California, than has ever been the case before. This change is in direct response to the dwindling numbers of traditional students, i.e, high school graduates, and diminishing resources vis-a-vis the same felt need to grow, change and expand their unique educational services.

Four-year college extension "centers" have already begun to appear in our communities, competing for the traditional student as well as for the so-called "adult market." Those institutions which have not yet established centers are at this moment conducting "marketing surveys" on the feasibility of establishing centers. Most alarming of all, in addition to the increased competition this has already produced and will occasion in the future, is the community response to these efforts. One recent survey in the Northern California Bay Area yielded the conclusion that local residents would attend the proposed four-year college center in preference to attending the local community college, this because of the perceived prestige of the four-year colleges versus the "second class image" which still wrongfully adheres to our community colleges.

In order to cope with this it is clear that community colleges must adopt new strategies and develop new partnerships and alliances to support the continuation and the expansion of our unique system of higher education. The following is an outline of some actions which I think would be helpful to us:

1. First, the Board of Governors should acknowledge and permit the right of local governing boards to define and to control the destiny of their institutions. Maximum flexibility in this regard should be provided so that local boards can promote programs of benefit to their unique communities and respond quickly and sensibly to local community needs. This will encourage local communities to increase their understanding of and support for the community colleges. In other words, the policy level centralization which attended, like a quiet and uninvited guest, the passage of the fiscal provisions of Proposition 13 should be reversed in accordance with the 1967 legislation which first created the California Community Colleges.
2. Second, the Education Code should be revised and simplified to accommodate local flexibility.
3. Third, the California Community Colleges should develop a systematic and funded approach to the advocacy of their mission and needs with the state legislature and with local governments. This has already begun at the federal level, but has not been an ongoing process at the state

level. Such programs as "Project People" and other activities were a good beginning; but a sophisticated, continuing process is now required for the 1980's.

4. Fourth, community colleges need to initiate strategies for securing reliable extramural funding: through corporate partnerships in programs of benefit to the private sector; through a twentieth-century approach to the establishment of local endowment, foundation and development programs; and through the increased involvement of boards, students and staff in the local communities, which involvement often results in increased donations as well as in increased apportionment for new students.

I am confident that, if we adopt some of the tried and proven methods of the four-year public and private sectors of higher education as well as those of other nonprofit organizations primarily in the fine arts world, the California Community Colleges will be able to survive this insidious period of financial constraint and become capable of funding new priorities. There is no need for us to re-invent the wheel in this regard. There is a need to use the wheel, instead of wooden blocks, for our vehicles of change.

Educational Purpose

Last and most important, let us turn our attention now to the central product, the central purpose of our being here: education. The 1980's pose many new educational challenges for us.

Some of these challenges are simple and some of the challenges are most complicated. Basically, the challenges are of two types: measures to correct errors of the recent past and measures to meet the needs of the future.

First, with reference to the past, it has become increasingly clear that the extreme educational permissiveness of the 1960's and 1970's has resulted in both a lack of literacy on the part of our students and a lack of coherency in the educational programs offered by our colleges, particularly in the area of general education. Addressing the basic skills issue, our colleges have begun to allocate significant funding to this area as well as instituting new competency requirements for our students. It is my hope, however, that we continue to share this responsibility with the K-12 sector for a limited period of time since it truly diverts resources from our overall enterprise and since this is not really a function of higher, and I must emphasize the term higher, education. Largely because this is an easily quantifiable area, I think our colleges are doing an excellent job with basic skills.

As more and more students of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds seek our services, however, we will need to find new methodologies and new funding sources, particularly from the federal government, in order to meet these enormous needs. I hope that the conservative mood of the country does not have a negative impact on this part of our agenda and I am most concerned about such actions as Dade County Florida, which, as you know,

houses one of our most progressive community college systems, has taken in prohibiting the use of county funds for other than English language services. I hope that our colleges will work hard to prevent such notions from being imported to California.

With respect to the future, there are some pressing issues which we must address in presenting a coherent educational experience for students as well as new program directions and pedagogical methodologies which are relevant to the demands of the 1980's. In a recent report of the Carnegie Council on the undergraduate curriculum, the following introduction is given:

> "Question: What part of undergraduate education was recently described as 'a disaster area' that 'has been on the defensive and losing ground for more than 100 years' by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1977)?
>
> "Answer: General education, the portion of college study most entering students encounter first."

The rise and fall of general education has a political history which rivals that of the Roman Empire, so I will not go into it here. However, I will state that I think the recent interest in general education on the part of the statewide committee and many local colleges is one of the healthiest educational developments in recent years. A coherent and an implemented philosophy of education is sorely needed in our institutions, not only for degree students but also for the general student body. One of the missions of our community colleges is to produce an educated citizenry capable of making informed policy determinations and choices. Let us ask ourselves a few questions about this aspect of our mission:

- How can our citizens vote on nuclear reactors when they are generally ignorant of physics, nuclear fission or nuclear fusion?
- How can our citizens decide such moral issues as abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering and the like when they have no experience in the sciences, technologies or ethics?
- How can our citizens or our future statesmen and women cope with the shrinking neighborhood of the world when they are uninformed of the disciplines pertinent to world cultures, world history, religion and languages? (President Carter and the State Department may have been surprised by the Islamic Revolution in Iran and by the Iraqi-Iranian War, but no student of ancient history or world culture was or would be surprised at these developments.)

It is clear that all of us must devote our energies in the 1980's to the development and implementation of both old and new directions in some of the following areas.

1. First, we must consider as a priority the development of state guidelines and local variations for a sensible program of general education for our students.
2. Second, we must expand our curricula to address specific needs of the 80's in such areas as:
   a) The health professions where national shortages suggest the need for new personnel in nursing, in medical assisting and in technologies to support the application of new therapies, equipment and

chemical treatments now employed to cure disease.

b) Energy-related disciplines leading to careers in the emerging field of alternative energy, as well as in the traditional methods of energy production.

c) Information systems such as data processing programming, management and repair. In addition, students should be exposed to programs designed to produce computer literacy as well as the related fields of forecasting, statistics and analytical studies. Such skills will be essential not only in the world of work but in coping with the information focus of daily living.

d) A revitalization of the humanities should occur in order to provide a means of organizing the complexities of our world; being able to make reasoned decisions; to restore a sense of ethical purpose in the conduct of business and the professions; and to improve the quality and the experience of living.

e) An insistance upon balance between the vocational and the liberal arts disciplines. We are not a supermarket. We cannot afford to be led by consumer demand. We must lead.

These seem to me to be the basic disciplinary needs of the 1980's; but in order to accomplish them we will need to ensure some of the things we've talked about earlier: the presence of

educational leaders; the development and identification of new partnerships and funding sources; the persuasive articulation of our purpose and mission in our communities and at the state level; and a commitment to provide the developmental education our faculties and staffs will need in order to implement our mutual goals and plans.

If we do not, we will become the victims of the protean, external trends of our society. We will prove that Edna St. Vincent Millay was correct in her observation that "life is not one damn thing after another; it's one damn thing over and over."

I am optimistic about the future, despite my concerns. I do not think it inevitable that we "go gentle" into the regressive "night" of conservatism. Our history, our philosophy and our sustained belief in the California Community College movement will, I think, carry us through this period if we actively pursue a clear agenda for change. We owe that much to ourselves; we owe that much to our students; and we owe that much to the future. To use a Marin County expression, I'd like to see us get on with it.

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